

## II. The Benchmark System for the *Countywide Planning Policies*

### Background

In 1990 the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA). For the first time in the State's history, all urban counties and their cities were required to develop and adopt comprehensive plans and regulations to implement the plans. To achieve an interjurisdictional coordinated countywide plan, GMA further required that King County and its 35 cities first develop framework policies, the King County *Countywide Planning Policies*, to guide the development of the jurisdictions' plans.

The *Countywide Planning Policies* (CPPs) define the countywide vision for the county and cities' plans. The policies were developed by the Growth Management Planning Council, a group of 15 elected officials, representing all King County citizens, adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council and ratified by the cities in 1994.

### Purpose

The *Countywide Planning Policies* are primarily goals that, if properly implemented, should improve the quality of life in King County during the next twenty years.

When the members of the Growth Management Planning Council (GMPC) approved the policies, they expressed an interest in creating a system that would tell future decision makers whether or not the policies are achieving their intended outcomes. The 2000 Benchmark Report is the fifth annual account to monitor the CPPs.

The purpose of creating a benchmark system is to provide the GMPC, other policy makers and the public with a method for evaluating jurisdictions' progress in implementing the *Countywide Planning Policies*. The system for the Benchmark Report was established by stating the desired outcomes of the CPPs; selecting relevant Indicators for each outcome, and then identifying quantifiable levels of achievement, or targets, for some of the Indicators.

### Why a Benchmark Report for the Countywide Planning Policies?

Generally, the Indicators that the Benchmark Committee has produced should be used as the GMPC originally intended: to enable future decision makers to determine whether or not the *Countywide Planning Policies* are being implemented in a way which achieves their intended outcomes.

The Benchmark System, which includes these Indicators, should also provide early warning if the policies are not having their desired effects. In that case, the system should provide sufficient information to enable policy-makers to determine whether different actions to implement the policies are needed, or whether minor or major revisions to the policies are

required. More specifically, the Benchmark System should be used to help the jurisdictions of King County establish priorities, take joint actions, and direct resources to solve problems identified in the *Countywide Planning Policies*.

## Data Sources in the Benchmark Report

The Benchmark Committee strives to provide the best data available for the Indicators to track the *Countywide Planning Policies* as adopted in 1994. In order to ensure data reliability, the Benchmark Committee will revise and, if necessary, correct data on an annual basis, when new and better sources become available.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Outcomes

PROMOTE FAMILY-WAGE JOBS

INCREASE INCOME AND REDUCE POVERTY

INCREASE BUSINESS FORMATION, EXPANSION AND RETENTION

CREATE JOBS THAT ADD TO KING COUNTY'S ECONOMIC BASE

INCREASE EDUCATIONAL SKILL LEVELS

### Indicators

1. Real wages per worker

2. Personal and median household income: King County compared to the United States

3. Percentage of population below the poverty level

4. New businesses created

5. New jobs created by employment sector

6. Employment in industries that export from the region

7. Educational background of adult population

8. High school graduation rate

## ENVIRONMENT

### Outcomes

PROTECT AND ENHANCE NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

PROTECT WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY

PROTECT WETLANDS

PROTECT THE DIVERSITY OF PLANTS AND WILDLIFE

INCREASE SALMON STOCK

DECREASE NOISE LEVELS

DECREASE WASTE DISPOSAL AND INCREASE RECYCLING

### Indicators

9. Land cover changes in urban and rural areas over time

10. Air quality

11. Energy consumption

12. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per year

13. Surface water and groundwater quality

14. Water consumption

15. Change in groundwater levels\*

16. Change in wetland acreage and functions.

17. Continuity of terrestrial and aquatic habitat networks\*

18. Change in number of salmon

19. Rate of increase in noise from vehicles, planes and yard equipment

20. Pounds of waste disposed and recycled per capita

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

### **Outcomes**

PROVIDE SUFFICIENT AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL KING COUNTY RESIDENTS

PROMOTE AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

PROMOTE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF AFFORDABLE LOW-INCOME HOUSING THROUGHOUT KING COUNTY

### **Indicators**

- 21. Supply and demand for affordable housing
- 22. Percent of income paid for housing
- 23. Homelessness
- 26. Apartment vacancy rate
- 24. Home purchase affordability gap for buyers with (a) median renter household income and (b) median household income
- 25. Home ownership rate
- 27. Trend of housing costs vs. income
- 28. Public dollars spent for low income housing
- 29. Housing units affordable to low income households

## **LAND USE**

### **Outcomes**

ENCOURAGE A GREATER SHARE OF GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS AND URBAN CENTERS; LIMIT GROWTH IN RURAL/RESOURCE AREAS

MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF URBAN LAND

ACCOMMODATE RESIDENTIAL AND JOB GROWTH IN URBAN AREAS

ENCOURAGE LIVABLE, DIVERSE COMMUNITIES  
BALANCE JOB AND HOUSEHOLD GROWTH

MAINTAIN QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF NATURAL RESOURCE LANDS

### **Indicators**

- 30. New housing units in Urban Areas and Rural/Resource areas, and in Urban Centers.
- 31. Employment in Urban Areas, Rural/Resource Areas, Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.
- 32. New housing units built through redevelopment
- 33. Ratio of land consumption to population growth
- 34. Ratio of achieved density to allowed density of residential development
- 35. Ratio of land capacity to 20 year household and job targets
- 36. Land with 6 years of infrastructure capacity \*
- 37. Acres of urban parks and open space
- 38. Ratio of jobs to housing in Central Puget Sound Counties, and King County sub-regions
- 39. Acres in forest land and farm land
- 40. Number and average size of farms

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Outcomes**

TRANSPORTATION AND LAND USE LINKAGE

AVAILABILITY OF MODES OTHER THAN  
SINGLE OCCUPANT VEHICLE  
MODE SPLIT

### **Indicators**

- 41. Percent of residents who commute one-way within 30 minutes
- 42. Metro transit ridership
- 43. Percent of residents who walk or use transit, bicycles or carpools as alternatives to the single

REDUCE COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION

occupant vehicle.

44. Ability of goods and services to move efficiently and cost effectively through the region.

PROTECT AND IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

45. Number of lane miles of city, county, and state roads and bridges in need of repair and preservation.

\* Data for these Indicators were not collected for the 1999 Benchmark Report.

## I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### The Purpose of the Economic Development Indicators

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' (CPPs) economic development policies are to:

- Promote Family-Wage Jobs
- Increase Income and Reduce Poverty
- Increase Business Formation, Expansion and Retention
- Create Jobs that Add to King County's Economic Base
- Increase Educational Skills

### Key Findings

Most of the news in the economic sector was still good news in 2000, although clearly the slowdown in the economy is leaving its mark on King County. The most positive signs are in the overall growth of jobs and the increase in all income indicators. However, the loss of manufacturing jobs, and a wavering high school graduation rate remain issues of concern for the long-term economic health of the County.

### *Wages*

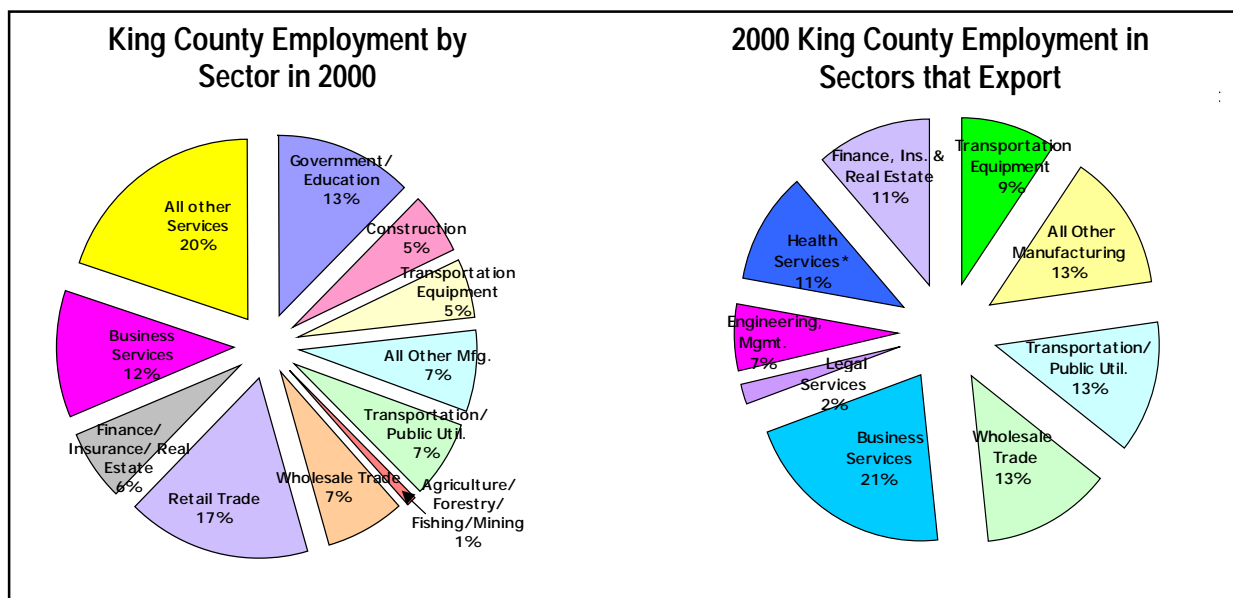
- The average wage in King County was just over \$47,700 during 2000. However, when the earnings of the software sector are excluded, the average earnings of all other workers in the County falls to about \$40,200.
- Wages in real dollars rose an average of 2.5% per year during the 1990s compared to a stagnation of real wages during the 1980s.
- This overall average masks large differences in wage levels among sectors of the economy. For instance, workers in local public education earned an average of \$30,600 or about 64% of the average wage for all workers in King County, and workers in the retail industry, about 17% of the workforce, earned only \$25,800 on the average. On the other hand, workers in the computer software and services sector, representing about 5% of the workforce in King County, earned an average of \$187,400.
- There are still many workers whose jobs do not pay a "family wage". In 2000, a basic, "livable" budget for a family of three, with one working adult, one toddler, and one school-aged child, would require earnings of about \$40,000 per year.

## Income

- King County Per Capita Personal Income was \$44,700 in 1999, up from \$40,900 in 1998. In the decade since 1989, it has risen about 93% or an annual average rate of nearly 7%. King County personal income was 157% of the nationwide average in 1999.
- Median household income for King County in 2001 is \$61,400. It was 138% of the nationwide average, having grown from 117% of the national average in 1980. In real dollars, median household income for the County has grown about 1.8% per year. During the 1980s, it grew at just under 1% per year.

## Business Formation and New Jobs

- During the last five years of the 1990s, creation of new businesses strengthened from the first half of the decade, showing an average annual growth rate of about 3.2%.
- In the late 1980s, new businesses were formed at a rate of almost 5% per year. From 1990 – 1995, the rate of business formation was about 2.1% per year. Although there are clearly cycles of slower and faster growth, over the long term, business growth appears fairly steady.
- From 1990 to 2000, 227,500 new jobs were added in King County. Job creation was approximately 25% for the decade, or an average of 2% per year.
- In 2000 Services employed 31% of all workers in King County. Nearly 12% of all County workers are in Business Services, with about 5% employed in the subsector of computer software and services.
- For the first time, this year *the Computer Software and Services* sector employed almost exactly the same number of workers as the *Transportation Equipment Manufacturing* sector (which includes aerospace manufacturing). This was due to both an increase in computer-related employment, and a decline in aerospace employment.
- Jobs declined by 36% in the *Transportation Equipment* sector over the decade, amounting to a net loss of 34,150 jobs. Other jobs in manufacturing grew by a modest 9% over the decade.
- Jobs in retail increased 25% and jobs in services (other than business services) increased 32% during the past decade. However, retail jobs pay an average wage of just over \$25,000, and many jobs in the services sector are also relatively low-paying.



### ***The Basic (Export) Sector***

- Cuts in employment in the aerospace industry were particularly sharp in 1999-2000. Therefore, the contribution of other industries and of the service sector to basic (export sector) employment is becoming critical for the economic health of the region.
- *Manufacturing*, as a whole, has declined from 43% of export jobs in 1980 to under 14% in 2000. The greatest growth in the export industries has been in business /computer and professional services. *Business Services* now comprises 21% of export industry jobs, compared to 9% in 1980.
- 52% of employment in King County's export industries involve the export of services rather than of raw materials or manufactured goods.

### ***Educational Attainment in King County***

- In 1990, 33% of King County adults had a college degree, compared to 21% for the U.S. as a whole. An additional 32% of King County residents had attended some college, but did not obtain a four year degree. 23% of King County adults had a high school diploma with no further education, and 12% did not have a high school diploma or equivalency degree.
- For the 1998-1999 school year the graduation rate in King County school districts was 79.6%, losing 2 percentage points from the 1997-98 rate. The graduation rate in 1999 showed a drop of 5 percentage points from the rate ten years earlier, in 1989.
- Opportunities are bleak for King County youth that drop out of high school. The job pool for uneducated, unskilled workers is shrinking, and pay for these jobs are low. Nationwide, earnings for female high school dropouts fell 29% in real dollars from 1991-1998, and for male high school dropout's earnings in real dollars fell 15%. In 1998, high school dropouts earned only 38% of what those with Bachelor's degrees or more earned.

### ***Educational Attainment in Washington State***

- In 1999, 91.2% of Washington State's adult population had a high school diploma or higher. Washington ranked second among all the states in the percent of its population who had graduated from high school. In 1990, 88% of King County's adult population had a high school diploma or higher. More recent census data on educational attainment in King County will be available next year.
- Nearly 29% of Washington State adults had a bachelor's degree or higher in 1999. Washington ranked ninth among all the states. Nationally, about 25% of adults had bachelor's degrees.

### **What We Are Doing for Economic Development**

- Providing workforce training, placement, and retention for individuals with multiple employment disadvantages through the Jobs Initiative, and aiding low income workers in transitioning from welfare to the workplace, through the Welfare to Work Program.
- Providing financing incentives to projects that generate union-scale construction jobs, and that also reserve a fixed percentage of permanent employment for low- and moderate-income workers.
- Requiring the use of apprentices during construction at County-funded projects, in order to encourage youth to enter trades that will pay a family wage.
- As a Brownfields Showcase Community, helping to preserve and reclaim contaminated industrial land, and thus to retain and expand the number of family-wage jobs in the County.

- Seeking to attract higher-paying technology and manufacturing jobs, especially to less affluent areas of the County. Working to insure sufficient physical and technological infrastructure in the urban areas to allow new industries to flourish.
- Providing loans to qualified small businesses that do not have access to traditional financing.
- Providing support, training, and advocacy for disadvantaged businesses.
- Providing various kinds of support to families with children and youth at risk of leaving the educational system.

## **II. ENVIRONMENT**

### **The Purpose of the Environmental Indicators**

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' environmental policies are to:

- Protect and Enhance Natural Ecosystems
- Improve Air Quality
- Protect Water Quality and Quantity
- Protect Wetlands
- Increase Salmon Stock
- Decrease Waste Disposal and Increase Recycling

### **Key Findings**

Benchmarks in the environmental area show mixed results. King County continues to make impressive progress in reducing water consumption, increasing recycling, and maintaining groundwater levels. King County lakes are generally in good shape. However, the protection of air quality, of fish and wildlife habitats, and of stream and wetland quality remain major challenges.

### ***Air Quality and Vehicle Miles Traveled***

- The number of good air quality days declined to 272 good days in 1999 and 245 good days in 2000. A higher federal standard for particulate matter that was adopted in Seattle in 1999 may account for more days being designated "moderate" or "unhealthful" rather than "good".
- Prior to these past two years the number of good air quality days had increased from 73 good days in 1980 to 343 good days in 1998.
- King County has been the site of major research studies on the affects of fine particle air pollution on childhood asthma. The hospitalization rate for children in Seattle's inner city was more than 600 per 100,000, while it was 100 per 100,000 for suburban children.
- Motor vehicles are by far the largest contributors to overall air pollution with 55% of the total, followed by industry with 21%, outdoor burning with 12%, and wood stoves and fireplaces with 12%. Outdoor burning, wood stoves and fireplaces contribute to the amount of particulate matter in the air. Small engines such as gas-powered lawnmowers, along with most vehicles, contribute to ozone in the air.

- Based on 1996 air samples, King County was ranked among the worst 5% of U.S. counties for airborne toxins. For instance, King County ranked high in levels of benzene, a known carcinogen which is found in gasoline.
- Vehicle Miles Traveled *Per Capita* in King County has risen just 4.4% from 1990 to 2000, after a rise of about 41% in the five years from 1985 to 1990.
- *Total* Vehicle Miles Traveled on County roads, however, has risen 20% since 1990, after rising 92% from 1985 to 1990.
- While the slower rate of growth in VMT is welcome, the continuing rise in the total number of miles traveled poses serious threats to air quality in this region.

### ***Energy Consumption***

- Total energy consumption has increased 35% since 1986 due primarily to population growth and economic growth, but also to some increases in per capita consumption. Most of this increase has been in residential usage of natural gas, and in diesel fuel.
- Per capita usage of automotive gasoline has fluctuated throughout this 15 year period, but it is currently at the same level as it was in 1986. More efficient vehicles probably account for most of this stabilization.
- Although the per capita consumption of gasoline has remained steady, the total usage of gasoline and diesel fuels continues to climb with population growth, and to endanger air quality.

### ***Water Quality and Quantity***

- Water clarity remains moderate to good in King County's three major lakes: Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish and Lake Union. About 29% of the smaller, monitored lakes in King County have poor or very poor water clarity, while 71% have good or moderate water clarity.
- 53% of King County streams are designated seriously or moderately degraded as measured by the Benthic Index of Biotic Integrity (B-IBI). Maintenance or restoration of healthy streams are an important part of preserving habitat for salmon and other aquatic species.
- While there are wide differences in each watershed, generally streams that are tributaries of Issaquah Creek in the Sammamish watershed are in the best condition, with all but two classified as healthy or moderately healthy. On the other hand, five out of eight monitored streams in the Middle-Green River sub-basin are seriously to moderately degraded.
- Conservation of water by King County residents, not only assures that adequate water will be available for our own needs throughout a dry season, but it also determines whether adequate water can be maintained in streams to protect fish and wildlife habitats.
- Per capita water usage in 2000 remained at about the same level as 1999. At just under 105 gallons per capita in 1999 and 2000, water consumption, is at its lowest level since 1993.
- Overall, water consumption per capita is notably lower this decade than in the 1980's when it showed an upward trend.
- Total water consumption has decreased since 1990, despite a growing population.
- Based on 2001 sampling results, overall groundwater quality in King County appears to be high. Very few of the samples exceeded Washington State Department of Health primary drinking water quality standards.
- Groundwater quantity does not seem to have changed significantly since the previous sampling in 1989-1995. As with surface water, conservation efforts assure that aquifer storage levels will remain high. When this occurs, groundwater will discharge and streams will have higher baseflows. If too much water is withdrawn from the

aquifer, storage will be low, and streams will have low base-flows. They may even dry up altogether in dry summer months.

- Changes of land use in an aquifer's recharge area - for instance, from natural vegetation to impervious surfaces such as pavement or concrete - can permanently reduce recharge amounts.

### ***Wetlands***

- King County has approximately 32,000 acres of identified wetlands. Because trend data is not yet available it is difficult to say whether or not there has been any net loss of wetland acreage.
- Wetlands are biologically highly productive ecosystems and are essential to a vast diversity of species, including birds, fish, reptiles, invertebrates and mammals for feeding, nesting, cover and breeding.

### ***Habitat Networks***

- King County is home to a number of threatened or vulnerable species. Among these are the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, grey wolves, spotted owls, common loons, piliated woodpeckers, and great blue herons. Many of these species, as well as other native species that are currently thriving, require relatively large connected blocks of habitat. The designation of the wildlife habitat network by the King County Comprehensive Plan is helping to preserve that continuity.
- There are still significant gaps in the wildlife networks, and development activity continues to take place in areas adjacent to the habitat network.
- Loopholes in the wildlife network codes, make it difficult to ensure protection of these habitats. Efforts to close the loopholes have been postponed several years until comprehensive policies and codes to protect aquatic and terrestrial habitat can be implemented.

### ***Salmon***

- Qualitative and quantitative data from over the last century indicate a precipitous and continuous decline in the abundance of native, naturally spawning salmon in Puget Sound watersheds, and in watersheds up and down the West Coast generally. For some stocks the decline has been an order of magnitude, e.g., from 10,000 returning fish a decade or two ago to 1,000 now.
- The gravity of this decline has been confirmed by the listing of Chinook salmon and bull trout under the Endangered Species Act, and by the real potential that a number of other salmonid stocks, including coho and kokanee, will be reviewed for listing as well.
- The total number of natural-spawning adult Chinook in the Lake Washington System reached a new low of 120 in 2000, after a low of 240 in 1999. The count of adult Chinook has been sparse compared to other stocks since data collection began in 1968.
- In the Snohomish/Snoqualmie Watershed there was an overall declining trend from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s. In 1998, however, adult Chinook returned to this watershed in their highest numbers – over 6,000 - since 1980. This trend has continued into 2000, with 6,095 adults returning to spawn this past year.
- In 1970, a high of 30,000 Coho was recorded in the Lake Washington System while a low of 200 was recorded in 1994. In 2000 about 1,950 Coho adults returned to Lake Washington, after several years of very low returns. However, the average return in the 1990s was much lower than in the 1970s and 1980s.

### ***Recycling and Waste Disposal***

- King County continues to do well in its recycling efforts. In 2000, nearly 1,100 lbs. per person were recycled in King County outside of Seattle, up significantly from about 250 lbs. in 1980, and 380 lbs. in 1990. King County is now recycling over four times as much per person as it was in 1980, and almost three times as much as it was in 1990.

- Although both the total and per capita amounts of waste generated continue to grow, the proportion of waste that is recycled has grown considerably since 1990.
- Since 1993 there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of residential waste that has been recycled. It has remained around 47% for the past three years. The goal is to reach 50% recycling by 2006.
- About 77% of residents living in single family homes or buildings with four units or less participate in curbside recycling.

### **What We Are Doing for the Environment**

- Reducing gasoline consumption by encouraging transit ridership, creating bicycle trails, promoting pedestrian-friendly urban design, and increasing availability of alternatives to travel by single-occupancy vehicles, such as buses, vanpools, carpools, bicycling, and walking.
- Reducing diesel emissions through Diesel Solutions, a public/private program that will accelerate the introduction of low sulfur fuels into Western Washington.
- Maintaining bans on outdoor burning and use of wood stoves when conditions warrant.
- Educating consumers on ways to conserve on household energy; providing sample compact fluorescent bulbs to replace incandescent bulbs.
- Promoting intensive conservation measures, including low-flow showerheads and faucets, low-flush toilets, and water-efficient clothes and dishwaters.
- Limiting lawn and garden watering during high demand times; promoting native landscaping requiring less additional watering.
- Protecting fisheries and wildlife by allowing adequate in-stream flows in rivers and streams.
- Undertaking in-stream habitat restoration, removing culverts that impede fish migration, and providing flood control.
- Enhancing and protecting streambanks with revegetation projects and rechannelization.
- Purchasing land at the headwaters of salmon streams and conserving it as "open space".
- Providing incentives to protect wetlands through programs such as Wetland Mitigation Banking.
- Addressing the overflow of sewers into Lake Union through a Combined Sewer Overflow Control Program, begun in the late 1980s.
- Continuing to monitor lake water quality to track any changes due to storm sewer overflow events, sewer pipe and pump system breakdowns, or shoreline activities.
- Tracking and mitigating development activities that may affect lake and stream water quality or wetlands.
- Discouraging practices, which contribute to either chemical or biological contamination of wells and springs: excess use of fertilizers, run-off from traffic areas, from industrial and construction activity, and from agricultural activity involving animal waste.
- Limiting development activity in rural areas, particularly if it involves increases in impervious surface, in order to protect the quantity of water in aquifers and to assure an adequate base flow in streams.
- Purchasing land to conserve open space that will augment the wildlife network.
- Leading the Tri-County Endangered Species Act (ESA) Response together with Pierce and Snohomish Counties and various stakeholders to develop local responses to ESA listings that protect habitat and restore salmon populations.
- Securing federal and state money for habitat acquisition and restoration work. Since 1998, King County has received almost \$16 million for habitat improvements.
- Informing and involving the public about salmon recovery issues.
- Introducing wider stream buffers where needed to protect fish habitat, through the new Fish and Wildlife Ordinance.

- Seeking ways to recycle and reduce more of the waste stream not currently included in curbside recycle programs, such as food waste recycling.
- Examining “new wastes” such as used computer equipment, and devising ways to reduce and reuse this waste stream.
- Encouraging King County manufacturers to practice environmental stewardship by considering, at the product design stage, how to reduce toxic materials, conserve energy, reuse materials, and recycle.
- Educating and encouraging builders and residents to consider sustainable or “green” building practices, such as the use of recycled construction materials, and structure design which minimizes resource use.

### **III. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

#### **The Purpose of the Affordable Housing Indicators**

The key outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies’ affordable housing policies are to:

- Provide Sufficient Affordable Housing for all King County Residents
- Promote Affordable Home Ownership Opportunities
- Promote Equitable Distribution of Affordable Low-Income Housing throughout King County

#### **Key Findings**

Providing affordable home ownership opportunities remains a major challenge in King County. A very modest 1% increase in the rate of home ownership was far short of the gains statewide and nationally. Even more critical, however, is the need for rental housing for low- and very low-income households, those earning below 50% of median income.

- The greatest deficit in rental housing is for those who earn less than 30% of H.U.D. median income (\$17,750 for a family of three). There were only 500 market-rate rentals affordable to this group of approximately 56,000 renter households. A household supported by one full-time worker, earning up to \$9 per hour would be in this group.
- The average-priced multifamily rentals in the County, at \$819 per month, would be unaffordable to a household supported by one wage-earner making \$16.00 an hour, or two wage-earners each earning \$8.00 an hour.
- Less than 10% of single-family rental houses are affordable to those with incomes below 50% of the median (\$23,000 - \$33,000). About 70% of single family rentals cost \$1000 or more to rent.
- Existing estimates of total persons homeless in King County are in the range of 6,500 on any given night; this number includes approximately 4,500 persons in shelters or transitional housing, unsheltered persons in Seattle, and unsheltered persons outside of Seattle.
- The median price of a single family home in 2000 was \$250,000. During 2000 a typical first-time buyer, at 80% of median income, earned about \$43,000. With a 5% down payment, that household could afford a home priced no more than \$140,000. Only 17.6% of all home sales in King County in 2000 (both single family and condo) were priced at that amount or less.
- The median-income household earned about \$55,900 in 2000. With a 20% down payment, that household could afford a home priced around \$213,000, still \$37,000 less than the cost of a median-priced single-family home.
- The rising trend in home prices has begun to reverse itself in 2001 as the economy cools. The median home price was down about 2.5% during the first quarter of 2001.

- Interest rates fell slightly at the end of 2000 and the beginning of 2001, but they may not have fallen enough to significantly affect affordability.
- The home ownership rate in King County rose exactly 1 percentage point during the 1990s, from 59% to 60%. This is a very modest increase during a period when home ownership rates in Washington State rose from 62 to 65% and in the United States from 64% to 67%.
- The lowest home ownership rates are in Kent, Tukwila, Seattle and Renton, with rates less than 48%. These cities have a combination of a high number of multifamily dwellings and a higher than average percent of single-family rentals.
- King County's average vacancy rate fell slightly to 3.6% in 2000. After showing a downward trend from 1994 – 1997, it had risen to 3.9% in 1999. A vacancy rate of 5% is generally regarded as a normal market rate. Lower rates indicate that there are fewer units available.
- In 2000, King County jurisdictions contributed \$19,998,000 of local public dollars toward long-term affordable housing for King County citizens who earn below 80% of the median income. These local dollars leverage a significant amount of federal and state funds.
- In King County and the suburban cities, approximately 554 new low-income housing units were funded with the help of local public dollars. Another 644 affordable units were supported through regulatory flexibility and incentives.
- In Seattle, local and federal dollars leveraged the creation of 586 low-income rental units. Another 119 affordable units were created through the HomeBuyer Assistance Program, and the Transfer of Development Rights Program.
- Approximately 21% of the population earn less than 50% of the median income, and another 17% earn 50% to 80% of median income. To meet demand, and to satisfy the goal of equitable distribution of affordable housing, at least 38% of a jurisdiction's total housing stock would need to be affordable. 22 out of 40 King County jurisdictions met these criteria in 2000.
- Only 12 cities had sufficient units affordable to those earning below 50% of median income. All of these were in South King County, except Skykomish.

### **What We Are Doing for Housing**

- Contributing about \$20 million per year in local public funds to create and preserve affordable housing.
- Adding from 1000 to 1500 new long-term affordable housing units to the housing stock each year.
- Permitting accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in urban and suburban neighborhoods.
- Completing a transit-oriented development (T.O.D.) at Overlake Park and Ride, which will include affordable housing units.
- Working with developers and cities to create other T.O.D.'s at several sites in the County.
- Setting affordable housing targets to assure an equitable distribution of housing for low-income households (under 50% of median and 50 – 80% of median) throughout the County.
- Providing operating support to transitional housing programs and rental assistance to homeless families with children, using funds from a state grant. In 2000, these funds housed over 230 homeless families for up to 12 months.
- Providing emergency shelter in King County outside Seattle. \$498,000 in federal and state funds helped to shelter 2,218 homeless households for 83,675 bed nights.
- Supporting transitional housing operations and homeless shelters, offering legal assistance, and providing services such as health care, to homeless families and individuals with \$734,000 in general funds.
- Making surplus County land available for affordable housing developments where feasible.

- Encouraging and zoning for a wide variety of housing choices within the Urban Growth Areas, and allowing more dense development in appropriate areas. In particular, promoting innovative design that integrates efficient land use and more land- and energy-efficient housing styles.
- Revitalizing existing neighborhoods through redevelopment.
- Allowing attached housing as a permitted use in all urban residential zones in Unincorporated King County. Permitting clustering of housing where sensitive areas might prevent developers from reaching zoned densities.
- Promoting measures, which can reduce processing, time for platting and permitting, and lower some land development costs.

## **IV. LAND USE**

### **The Purpose of the Land Use Indicators**

The intended outcomes of the Countywide Planning Policies' (CPPs) land use policies are to:

- Direct the majority of growth into the Urban Areas of the County, particularly into Urban Centers, and
- Limit growth in Rural and Resource Areas.
- Monitor land development trends in King County that support or undermine these outcomes.

### **Key Findings**

The County is making considerable progress towards its land use goals. In 2000 it reduced residential development in rural areas to about 4% of all housing growth. It is building a higher percentage of housing in Urban Centers, and countywide, it is meeting its target for new housing. Employment growth has been more rapid than forecast, but there are challenges in continuing to focus growth into urban centers outside of Seattle. Continuing to reduce growth in the rural area, and to increase efficient land-use in some suburban areas, are also critical tasks.

### ***Housing in Urban vs. Rural Areas***

- In 2000, 96% of all new housing units permitted were within the Urban Growth Area. This continues the trend of slower growth in the Rural Area while growth accelerates in the Urban Area.
- While growth in the rural area has slowed since 1995, the growth rate, averaging about 800 units per year, is still double that projected in the CPPs. In order to remain within the 20-year target, the rural area growth will have to average no more than 250 units per year over the next 12 years.
- The target of the CPPs is for 25% of all new housing units to be built in the Urban Centers. From 1995 to 2000 about 18% of all new housing units were built in the Urban Centers. However, the percent has been increasing. 39% of all new housing units built in 2000 were in Urban Centers. 80% of these were in the Seattle Urban Centers.

### ***Progress Towards Housing and Job Targets***

- King County as a whole is doing very well in achieving its twenty-year housing goal. After 8 years (1993 – 2000), or 40% of the 20-year planning period, King County has permitted about 45% of its household target. This amounts to about 85,000 net new units. The mid-point of the current twenty-year target range is about 190,000 net new units.

- The rate of new employment growth in King County has been nearly twice the rate forecast in the Countywide Planning Policies. In the five years from 1994 – 1999, nearly 198,000 net new jobs were created in King County, or over 50% of the twenty-year target of 312,000 – 399,000 net new jobs.
- Job growth has begun to slow. There were 35,450 new jobs added in 1999, and 20,443 in 2000. It is likely that the trend toward fewer new jobs will continue over the next couple of years.

### ***Geographic Distribution of Jobs***

- About 25 – 30% of new jobs were in Urban Centers. This falls short of the goal that 50% of new jobs would be located in the Urban Centers. However, as with housing, the proportion of new employment locating in Urban Centers is growing slowly each year.
- The geographic distribution of jobs in King County is becoming more balanced. In 1980, Seattle was the regional job center with 58% of jobs located in the Seattle-Shoreline area. 28% of King County jobs were located in South King County and only 14% were located on the Eastside.
- By 2000, Seattle-Shoreline's share of total jobs had shrunk to 46% while the Eastside grew to 28%. South King County's share decreased slightly to 26%.

### ***Jobs-Housing Balance***

- Historically, King County, as the regional jobs center, has had a higher jobs-housing ratio than Snohomish or Pierce County. There were 1,110,000 covered jobs and 739,100 housing units in King County in 1999, or 1.50 jobs per housing unit.
- The jobs-housing ratio has remained virtually the same in Seattle-Shoreline and in South King County over the last decade. In other words, there has been a proportional rate of growth in housing and jobs in those sub-county regions.
- The rapid job growth on the Eastside has driven up the jobs-housing ratio from .80 in 1980 to 1.19 in 1990 and 1.46 in 1999. This is consistent with the change in the Eastside from a bedroom community to a thriving economic center.

### ***Redevelopment and Increasing Achieved Densities***

- In 2000, at least 46% of all new housing were built on redeveloped land. Most of this redevelopment was in the Seattle-Shoreline area, but South King County also built about 36% of its new units on redeveloped land.
- In 1999, urban King County achieved a density of just over 5 dwelling units per acre in its single family zones, and of approximately 21 dwelling units per acre in its multifamily zones. Achieved density appears to be about 75 – 85% of zoned density in the cities that have reported this data.

### ***Parks and Open Space***

- Countywide, there were 13.9 acres of parks and open space per thousand residents in the urban area, down from 14.5 in 1996. This decline is mainly due to an adjustment of the urban growth boundary that took most of the Cougar Mountain Wildland out of the “urban parkland” category, and put it in the rural area of the County. A ratio of 10 – 15 acres per resident is recommended.
- During 2000, about 500 acres of parks or open space were created, or were transferred from County ownership to cities.

## **What We Are Doing About Land Use**

- Preserving open space in rural areas in exchange for higher densities in urban areas through the Transfer of Development Credits Program and Four to One Program.
- Allowing clustering of housing in urban areas to maximize net densities, and easing height restrictions in some urban settings.
- Encouraging “transit-oriented development” in urban centers.
- Seeking to attract new employment to Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers.
- Permitting high density housing in Urban Centers so that more workers can live close to jobs.
- In a collaborative effort among all jurisdictions, preparing to extend growth targets based on new population forecasts.

## **V. TRANSPORTATION**

### **The Purpose of the Transportation Indicators**

The key outcomes of the CPPs transportation policies are to:

- Enhance Transportation and Land Use Linkages
- Increase the Availability of Modes other than Single Occupant Vehicle
- Reduce Commercial Traffic Congestion
- Protect and Improve the Transportation Infrastructure

### **Key Findings**

Improving traffic mobility is a high priority for both citizens and policy-makers in King County. Significant strides are being made in increasing transit and carpool ridership, and reducing dependence on single occupancy vehicles. This is especially evident in commute trips. Nevertheless, over 50% of all daily trips are still by single-occupancy vehicle; we are traveling more, and several major King County highways are over-capacity every day. Although freight trucks account for only about 5 – 10% of vehicles on the major roads, commercial traffic is increasing on these roads faster than car traffic.

### ***Transit Ridership***

- In 2000, transit ridership in King County surpassed 100 million rides given on motorbus, trolleybus, streetcar, DART and Sound Transit.
- Transit ridership grew by 3.8%, or an additional 3.7 million boardings, in the year 2000. This data includes 2.3 million Sound Transit rides managed by King County Metro.
- Figure 42.2 shows that the per capita annual transit ridership has steadily risen since 1995. In 2000, the average King County resident rode the bus fifty-eight times a year.
- The capacity of King County park and ride lots decreased by 547 stalls since 1999 due to closure of underutilized leased park and ride lots and the temporary closure of the Overlake Park and Ride.
- The Seattle-Shoreline, I-90/SR-520 Corridor and South King County park and rides are near full capacity. However park and rides in Northeast King County are underutilized with less than 70% of spaces occupied. This may be due to

a number of factors such as frequency of bus service, length of travel time downtown compared to automobiles, and accessibility of facilities.

- Since 1990 there has been a modest upward trend in the use of other modes of transportation than single-occupancy vehicle. As a proportion of all daily trips, SOV use has declined 4.4 percentage points, while Transit and HOV/Carpool use have each increased about 2 percentage points. Non-motorized and other modes have also increased slightly.
- Over half of all daily travel trips are still made in single occupancy vehicles. However, considering only work trips, commuters are more likely to use transit, carpool, or find other means of transportation than single occupancy vehicles to commute to work. In 1999, nearly 32% of work trips were by means other than single occupancy vehicle.
- Although 90 – 95% of the vehicles on the road are cars or small pickups, freight trucks have increased as a share of total vehicles on the road since 1993. Truck traffic on I-5 has increased by 46% and cars by 13% in the past seven years. On SR 18, truck traffic increased by 8% while car traffic increased 4.4%. With both more cars and more trucks on the road, commercial traffic is less able to move efficiently throughout the region.
- Traffic congestion on major King County highways is near or above capacity (volume to capacity ratio  $> .80$ ) from around 2 PM to 6 PM. This corresponds with the period when cars are most frequently on the road. Truck traffic peaks between 9 am up to 2 PM when most people are at work. However after 2 PM, the number of truck drivers on the road decreases as they try to avoid commuting during the afternoon rush hour.
- Volume to capacity ratios for I-5 at 185th shows it to be beyond capacity both north and southbound in the evening peak hour and beyond capacity southbound in the morning. By this measure, congestion grew significantly worse from 1995 – 1999.

### **What We Are Doing About Transportation**

- Updating the Six-Year Transit Development Plan
- Promoting alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle use through public education, improvements to the transit system, car and vanpool alternatives, and maintenance and creation of bike paths.
- Creating 6,400 new park and ride spaces by 2004 including expansions involving:
  - ◆ 500 spaces at Northgate,
  - ◆ 1,000 spaces at Eastgate,
  - ◆ 700 spaces at Pacific Highway South and
  - ◆ 500 spaces at the Issaquah Highlands park and ride.
- Supporting the development of the Sound Transit commuter rail and light rail systems.
- Pursuing transit-oriented development (T.O.D.'s) and other land use policies, which increase proximity of jobs and housing, so that commute distances, will be shorter.